

**GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE BLIND  
Smyrna Rest Stop  
Conference Room  
5500 DuPont Pkwy.  
Smyrna, DE  
August 3, 2018**

**A quorum was determined and the meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM**

**ROLL CALL:**

**Council Members:** Council Chair Lloyd Schmitz, Patti Addison, Ken Rolph, Pat Carzo, Deidre Morris,

Members Absent: Jillian Queen, Kat Bottner

**Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) Staff:** Elisha Jenkins, Director; Sandi Miller, Deputy Director; Jill Morrison, Erin Weaver, Michele Hamilton

**Public:** Mary Marsh, Rob Keller, Wayne Marsh, Dava Newnam, Director, Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD), Julie Fedele, Division of Research

**MINUTES:** Ken Rolph made the motion to accept the May 4, 2018 minutes; Deidre Morris seconded the motion. Motion carried. Patti Addison made the motion to accept the June 1, 2018 minutes with one organization name correction. Ken Rolph seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**DIVISION FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED DIRECTOR'S REPORT-Elisha Jenkins**

**Blind Entrepreneurs Program:**

The healthy vending analysis for FY-18 close-out (July 2017 – June 2018), was completed during this reporting period. The analysis showed that June 2018 provided the highest increase in sales for the Fiscal Year at 2,175 units, or an increase of 25% with 40% healthy vending options stocked in all BEP unassigned locations throughout the state. Overall, for the entire Fiscal Year, sales finished at a 7,534 unit of sales increase, or a 7.3% total increase. Healthy vending resources and opportunities include the following:

The Blind Vendors participated in training on implementing healthy vending. Several resources and comparative data were shared and discussed. Initial outlook suggests Delaware is on the cutting edge of implementation.

DVI is scheduled to meet with DTCC on the cafeteria. Additional updates will be provided at the next meeting.

**Independent Living Services:**

The Independent Living Unit and Vocational Rehabilitation Unit within the Division collaborated on the Summer Skills Academy that was held from July 9 through July 20 at BlindSight Delaware. Eight (8) campers participated in various activities including lessons in clothing and money management, food preparation skills, career exploration, and orientation and mobility. The University of Delaware's Cooperative Extension's Nutrition Program also visited campers where they learned about healthy eating and making smart food choices. Art Therapy Express provided activities that included painting and clay sculpture creation, while PAWS for people visited the camp to provide pet therapy to the participants. The campers also participated in a variety of field trips including the Franklin Institute, the National Aquarium, and the Delaware Rock Gym. On the last

day, a graduation celebration occurred where the students were recognized for their accomplishments. In addition, DVI recognized graduates and interns at the celebration.

After the recognition ceremony, the Division hosted its First Family Fun Event for all DVI consumers and their guests. Registration topped 145 for this “Backyard BBQ” that included yard games, board games, and music played by a visually impaired DJ.

The Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) held its first public forum to obtain public feedback as the Council prepares to write the 2020 – 2022 State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). The forum was held on June 28th at BlindSight, Delaware, with additional forums being held in Kent and Sussex Counties as well. One of the Division’s consumers attended the New Castle meeting where he addressed how the Peer Support Program helped him by providing access to a community of people with the same vision issues to support him, how he learned something new about services and resources at every meeting while making many new friends, and how he enjoys attending the Peer support meetings and looks forward to participating in each one.

The Division for the Visually Impaired is pleased to support the NFB BELL program being held at Blindsight Delaware from July 30, 2018-August 10, 2018.

#### Vocational Rehabilitation:

During this reporting period, several of the Division’s Transition Students enjoyed the opportunity to attend the Level-Up summer camp program held in Kansas this year. Those students attending the Level-Up program were provided the ability to increase their level of technological literacy, interpersonal skills, explore various careers, and connect with a mentor in their field of interest. Students came back with a free laptop.

Mission Transition 2018 was a huge success thanks to the collaboration of staff members from the Education and Orientation & Mobility Unit, Vocational Rehabilitation, Independent Living Services. Nine (9) students took part in a wide variety of Expanded Core Curriculum activities throughout the week, including:

- Planning a menu for four meals, preparing a shopping list, estimating costs, shopping at the grocery store, and comparing estimated costs with actual expenditures;
- Preparing breakfast, lunches for “on the go”, and dinners;
- Dining in a College dining hall and local restaurants;
- Planning routes to local area businesses and making DART reservations;
- Career exploration, resume writing, mock interviews, and disclosure of disability;
- Engaging in healthy discussions regarding the dangers of alcohol and tobacco use (in any form), strategies to cope with peer-pressure, and how to continue to live an alcohol and tobacco free lifestyle.

Legislation: The Division is grateful to a stakeholder for ensuring Teachers for the Visually Impaired are included in the Loan Forgiveness benefit for educators.

Preparation 2020 Budget- The Division is preparing for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2020 budget effective July 1, 2019. The Division will be requesting contractual dollars to support its operating budget.

Sunset Process- The Division will be engaged in the Sunset Review process beginning in the fall.

#### Scheduled Upcoming Events

- Technology Fair- October 18<sup>th</sup>

## **Division for the Visually Impaired Education and Orientation & Mobility Unit Report – Erin Weaver**

### **Clients Served**

The Education Unit is currently serving 294 students. The Orientation & Mobility Unit is currently serving 157 clients.

### **Staffing**

The Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) currently employs 13 full time Teachers of the Visually Impaired. One Teacher of the Visually Impaired has retired effective August 1, 2018. The Division for the Visually Impaired has hired one teacher who will begin on August 20, 2018.

Currently, DVI employs 1 casual/seasonal and 5 full-time Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialists.

### **Certification/Alternate Route to Certification**

All teachers that received emergency certification have transitioned to a “Certificate of Eligibility” as required by DEEDs. There are 7 teachers enrolled in university programs for certification. Two of the teachers are enrolled in their final course and will complete their internship this fall. They are on target to complete their certification requirements prior to the end of this calendar year. The remaining 5 teachers are on target to complete their certification requirements prior to the end of the 2019 calendar year.

### **Professional Development**

All members of the Education and the Orientation & Mobility Units are required to participate in professional development in order to keep their certification up-to-date. The following list of professional development opportunities is not all inclusive, however, it does highlight some unique activities our teachers have participated in:

- Quality Programs for the Visually Impaired
- Presentations at the Chapter and International AER Conferences
- American Printing House for the Blind Product Development Field Testing
- Assistive Technology Training, specifically Braille Notetakers and Screen Readers
- Unified English Braille Math and Science Training
- AER University Accreditation Review

### **Events**

The following outreach programs have occurred since April:

- April, May & June’s Family Nights
- Children’s Beach House (22 Students)
- Mission Transition (10 Students)
- Camp Abilities (31 Students)
- Student Council Trip to Leftys and Rehoboth Beach Boardwalk
- Space Camp (12 Students will attend in September)
- Fall Beach House for 9th-12th grade students is scheduled for October

### **Unified English Braille (UEB) Implementation Plan**

The UEB Implementation plan has been posted to the DVI website, Schoology group, and the VI Collaborative Schoology group.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None reported at this time.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None reported at this time.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

No public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Pat Carzo made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Deidre Morris. Motion carried. Lloyd Schmitz adjourned the meeting at 11:07 AM.

Next meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 14, 2018.

Respectfully submitted by

Michele Hamilton  
Administrative Specialist  
Division for the Visually Impaired